

ARCHITECT YASMEEN LARI WINS JAPAN'S FUKUOKA PRIZE

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Renowned Pakistani architect Yasmeen Lari has won the prestigious Japanese Fukuoka Prize in the Arts and Culture category for this year.

Yasmeen Lari is the third Pakistani recipient of the Fukuoka Prize with qawwali maestro Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and social scientist Dr Uxi Mufti as the previous winners. Established in 1990, the prize was founded by Fukuoka City of Japan. The awards are presented every year to honour the outstanding work of organisations, groups or individuals for the promotion and preservation of diverse cultures of Asia.

The award aims to increase awareness of Asian cultures and to institute a broad framework for exchange and mutual learning among the peoples of Asia.

"I feel honoured to receive this award. It is indeed recognition for the good things happening in Pakistan," said Yasmeen Lari.

She said she was nominated by the Fukuoka Prize committee, which looked into her work in architecture, community development and its preservation for a specific length of time. "The cultural aspect of this country is very important to us. I'm grateful of Pakistan for giving me the opportunity to do things," Yasmeen said.



Citation on the Fukuoka Prize states that Yasmeen has not only created many contemporary buildings but has also played a decisive role in the preservation and conservation of historical building, through the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, which she herself founded.

We are delightfully surprised and honored that the CEO and Chair of Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, Yasmeen Lari has been announced as the winner of the Art and Culture category for the Fukuoka Prize 2016.

The Fukuoka Prize is an award given to honor the outstanding work of individuals for preserving and creating Asian culture. The other two winners this year are musician A.R. Rehman in the Grand Prize category; and historian Ambeth R. Ocampo in the Academics category.

Yasmeen Lari is the first woman architect of Pakistan, known as one of the best in the profession. She graduated from Oxford School of Architecture (now Oxford Brookes University) and was elected member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 1969. In 1978 she was elected president of the Institute of Architects Pakistan (IAP); five years later she became the first chairperson of Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners.

She co-founded Heritage Foundation of Pakistan in 1980 with her husband, noted historian Suhail Zaheer Lari, for undertaking research and safeguarding. She also served as UNESCO's National Advisor from 2003-2005; and was nominated as a Fellow of Ashoka, Innovators for the Public, USA.

Lari has been published by UNESCO as one of sixty women who have made significant contributions to the organization since its inception. She is one of only four architects from Pakistan whose works have been published in The Encyclopedia of the 20th Century World Architecture. She has received multiple awards like the UN Recognition Award (2002) for the promotion of culture and peace; the Sitara-i-Imtiaz (The Star of Excellence) and the Hilal-i-Imtiaz (The Crescent of Excellence) awards by Government of Pakistan; and now is the first woman architect and third person from Pakistan to receive the prestigious Fukuoka Prize 2016, which was previously won by Qawaali Singer, Mr. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (1996) and Culture Expert, Mr. Uxi Mufti (2006), both in the Art and Culture category. Previous winners of the Fukuoka Prize have also gone on to win the Nobel Prize like Mr. Muhammad Yunus and Mr. Mo Yan.



Post retirement, after the Earthquake of 2005 she devised several programs for post-disaster communities: Heritage and Tradition for Rehabilitation and Development, Build Back Safer with Vernacular Methodologies (BBSVM), and Women centered Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) that have formed the basis for the World's largest zero carbon footprint shelter program, as well as disaster compliant low cost initiatives which have fostered pride and self-reliance among communities. By linking heritage with rehabilitation and development through environmentally sustainable vernacular construction techniques and revitalization of craft skills, the programs have led to large-scale economic empowerment of women and economic regeneration within communities.

Her works have been exhibited in the First Chicago Architectural Biennial 2015 and in 'Creation from Catastrophe' exhibition 2016 by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Additionally, she has authored and co-authored several books on cultural heritage of Pakistan.

Lari has been very vocal in the past about promoting women and zero-carbon architecture for the betterment of communities and preserving cultures. The Fukuoka Prize provides her with a platform and a vast audience, particularly in the architecture communities.

She has stated that the cultural aspect of this country is very important to her and that she is grateful to Pakistan for giving her the opportunity to work for the betterment of her country.

She is looking forward to her upcoming visit to Japan where she is to deliver lectures and discuss the cultural heritage and traditional crafts of Pakistan.

"We need to work towards preserving our cultural heritage as well as creating cultural ties between nations. I am very excited to get an opportunity to go to Japan. It would be magnificent if we could explore the Japanese traditional and decorative crafts, especially Origami, Kirigami, Chochin (Paper Lanterns), and Ceramics, and bring them back to Pakistan to spread them throughout our villages for income generation. I would also like to take the traditional crafts of Pakistan to Japan, especially our work on Kashi"